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SURFING FOR SOLUTIONS

by Carol Hanson

Carol Hanson attended the GATEWAY VOYAGE® *in the summer of 2000. She is a special education teacher and a writer and lives in rural Missouri on thirty acres with her three dogs and three cats.*

The following experience doesn't qualify as scientific research, but it is the true story of how Hemi-Sync® made a real difference in quality of life for my dog and me. Brandy was fourteen last November. She is a mixed breed, part German shepherd and part golden Labrador retriever, and she has always been nervous during thunderstorms. I used to be able to quiet her by sitting up with her on the couch. Last spring things began to change. Nothing I did seemed to comfort her. She pawed, panted, and quaked no matter what. I assumed that the change was due to her growing progressively more deaf and getting on in years. The veterinarian suggested a half dose of Dramamine® to calm her and make her drowsy. This worked for a while, although it took an hour to have an effect. I placed it in food, but she often refused to eat when she was upset. Finally, it didn't quiet her either. Then the veterinarian suggested a medicine for dogs that panic when left alone. It was a disaster. Brandy reacted by becoming even more agitated.

One stormy evening, in despair, I went out on my large front porch and found that she wouldn't follow me out and didn't cause a rumpus about my being there. Thus, for this past summer and fall, I made a practice of sleeping on the porch during rainstorms. It was actually an enjoyable experience, and I often took my little boom box and listened to tapes before going to sleep. I thought I had a workable solution. We wouldn't have thunderstorms in the winter, and I could sleep out again the next spring.

Instead, Brandy became agitated almost every evening. The behavior would continue for four to six hours as she tried to climb up on me and then pawed at me. She never settled down. At first I made sure we went walking every day to tire her out. Eventually I had to wait and walk her just before bedtime to insure that she would settle down to sleep. Even then, she seldom slept through the night and awakened me by climbing on my bed panting at two or three in the morning.

Finally, even walks were useless. Every night my dog stood and quaked, yawning and panting or attempting to climb on me. There seemed to be no other choice but to put her down, and I didn't like it. In a final attempt to put off what seemed inevitable, I decided to try my Hemi-Sync *Surf* CD. I did not expect much. Earphones were obviously out, and it would lose a lot from being played on a small stereo player. In addition, since Brandy is nearly deaf, I doubted it

would get through to her at all. I was wrong. It had an amazing and wonderful effect. She calmed down and in about five to ten minutes was resting or sleeping on her bed near me. As the weeks passed, she had fewer and fewer days when she got panicky, and I no longer had to leash her to keep her off of the couch. The quaking nearly disappeared. She also started sleeping through the night, although her bed of choice is still mine.

There were two interesting side effects. Sometimes Brandy seems to "ask" for the *Surf* CD. She comes and stands on her bed in front of the CD player and waits. If I still don't get it, she comes over and nudges me with her head. It doesn't happen all the time, and I can't swear to her meaning, but when I turn on *Surf* she never complains. The second side effect occurred recently while I was listening to *Energy Walk* with earphones and Brandy walked up to the couch. I was really into the tape. Although aware she was there and would probably try to climb up, I decided to stay focused and do nothing. She stood still until the tape was finished, then quietly walked to her bed and lay down. I can't explain why, but I was impressed nonetheless.

Brandy and I have been companions for over twelve years. I am comfortable with her dying when she is ready, but I hate the thought of taking her to be put down. She still enjoys life, loves our long walks, and is not sick or in pain. The effects of Hemi-Sync *Surf* have allowed both of us greater peace of mind and comfort. Thanks Bob, thanks Laurie, thanks to all of you.

[Carol wrote on September 28 to say, "Brandy died in mid-July at fourteen years, eight months. She was a wonderful companion, but it was time for her to go and I know she is here in spirit."]

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